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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPECIAL DAYS

HELEN GOODRICH

The various aspects of the spirit which are chosen as the moving power in our school life are represented during the course of the year in the special exercises. Daily morning exercises are the outcome of some particular interest of a group or an individual; but special exercises stand for certain conceptions which give inspiration to the life of the community and determine its characteristic direction and qualities. All special exercises have the backing of tradition of some sort. It may be one of our deep-seated racial traditions which supplies the suggestion of validity for the celebration, or it may be a mere school tradition which gives sanction to the content and form of the exercise. Both sorts are opportunities for the clarification of ideals and the expression of beliefs held by the community as a whole. Year by year they restate and verify the spiritual aspect of growth, giving it expression in the most beautiful and appropriate forms we can command.

Christmas, Thanksgiving, patriotic days, stand for love, for the impulse of gratitude, for national spirit; it is the renewed discovery by the individual, year by year, of stability and unity in our spiritual life, symbolized by these exercises, which gives them their greatest value. Field Day is a general exercise of prime importance, when the gymnastic work of the year culminates in a whole day given to celebrate our belief in the scientific and regular training of the body. On May Day we express, in more or less traditional forms, some of the sentiments to which our Anglo-Saxon inheritance entitles us. It is a day greatly beloved by the children, both old and young. The St. Valentine's Day resolves itself into a party, in which every one receives some token of affection. Hallowe'en is the day for fairies and elves; songs, stories, games and plays, in which the imagination is appealed to in all of the fun-making, tend to redeem this degenerated holiday for the children.